

The Farce of the Padded Steel-jaw Leghold Trap

The principal device used by American trappers to capture animals for the fur trade is the steel-jaw leghold trap, one of the most barbaric instruments invented by man. Inherently cruel, steel-jaw traps must close with lightning-quick speed to catch the victim and use vise-like force to prevent escape.

There are many sizes and types of steel-jaw traps used to capture dozens of different species. Toothed steel-jaw traps are completely metal and the jaws are jagged like teeth. Stop-loss traps are designed to prevent animals from chewing off their legs to gain freedom.

In the last few decades, a new type of trap has been introduced — the padded steel-jaw trap, named for the thin rubber strip running along a portion of the jaws. While the name implies softness the trap still must cause pain and physical injury to capture and hold an animal.

Most types of steel-jaw traps are now illegal in about half of the fifty states. Throughout the world, more than sixty countries also prohibit their use. By 1995, these traps will be banned throughout the entire European Community (EC).

The sentiment in the EC against these traps is so strong that the furs of over a dozen animal species usu-

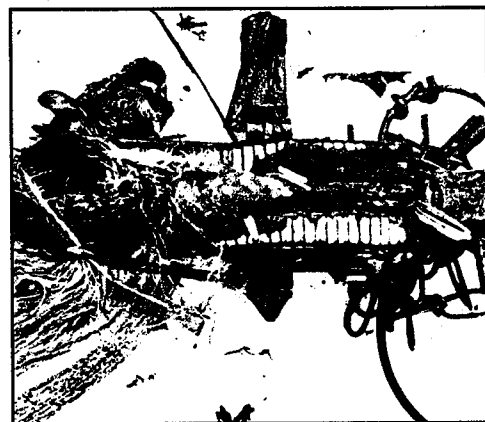
ally caught with these traps are already restricted. Imports of these furs are prohibited unless the exporting country has banned steel-jaw traps or adopted "international agreed humane trapping standards."

The only agency that fulfills this second option is the International Organization for Standards (IOS). In order to gain import access to the EC, pro-steel trap interests are now attempting to create "humane" trapping standards under the auspices of the IOS. Unfortunately, the IOS usually deals with engineering standards, not subjective terms like "humane."

Your help is needed to fight these deceptive standards. Please sign the following statement and return it to AHA's Washington, DC office. If you can, please distribute copies of this petition for signatures.

AHA
322 Massachusetts Ave. NE
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Cathy Liss is the executive director for the Animal Welfare Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing the total pain and fear inflicted on animals by man. During her 12 years with the Institute, Ms. Liss has been fighting against the steel-jaw leghold trap.



The concept of the steel-jaw leghold traps prevents them from being humane. They must close hard and fast to capture and hold the animal whether there's a strip of rubber "padding" them or not. These pictures were taken as part of a study in Maryland to test a prototype of the padded steel-jaw trap (above). As you can see, they still cause enough panic to make chewing off a foot a viable option to staying trapped (below).



Animal Welfare Institute

TO: The Secretary-General of the International Organization for Standardization (IOS)

We, the undersigned, believe that the trapping standards currently under consideration by IOS Technical Committee 191 are false and deceptive, because the word "humane" is used to describe and recommend animal traps which inflict extreme pain and suffering, broken teeth and bones, forcible drowning, gangrene, and other injuries.

The "padded" version, agonizing despite a cosmetic strip of hard rubber on the jaws, would meet these intolerably weak standards and therefore be recommended as humane. Traps which mutilate or kill nontarget animals including dogs, cats, farm animals, birds, and endangered species would also be called humane.

We strongly urge the IOS to remove the word "humane" from the trap standards currently being drafted by IOS Technical Committee 191 and its Working Groups. Anything less is an official endorsement of cruelty to animals.